STATEMENT ON THE SCHOOL-HOUSED PUBLIC LIBRARY

Prepared by the

Interdepartmental Liaison Group on

Library Development

March 1986

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CULTURE
EDUCATION

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MEMBERS OF THE INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON GROUP

ON LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

as of January 31, 1986

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The Interdepartmental Liaison Group on Library Development (ILGOLD) was established November 2, 1976 by the Ministers of Culture, Education and Advanced Education. The committee consists of representatives of those three departments. The committee's mandate is to review government involvement in libraries, to look for commonality of interests, to establish guidelines where possible and to make recommendations on library development where there is overlap in responsibility.

Summary

The school-housed public library has long been a controversial issue in North America. Many such combinations have been tried, and, in general, both school and public library authorities agree that the combination does not successfully meet the requirements for service of the two distinct institutions, each with its differing roles and goals.

This statement recommends:

1) The development of co-operative arrangements between school libraries and public libraries be strongly encouraged at local, regional and provincial levels.

2) No further development of combined school/public libraries except in designated community schools.

3) That where municipal libraries are housed in schools, the municipal board should comply with the Libraries Regulation, and both parties should evaluate the operation and its success against recommended guidelines.

4) Criteria for future consolidated operations in a community school setting should be those set out in this document.

This statement on the school-housed public library in Alberta is organised into five sections:

I. Present Situation
II. Operation and Evaluation of Combined Services
III. Networking and Co-operative Arrangements
IV. Public Library Service Within a School
V. Recommendations

I. PRESENT SITUATION

A. Definitions

1. Municipal Libraries

Municipal libraries are administered under the Alberta Libraries Act with a library board responsible for their operation. The library board, in turn, is responsible to a municipal governing authority. Public library service is governed by The Alberta Libraries Act, Chapter L-12.1, 1983; and The Libraries Regulation, 1984.

The Libraries Regulation encourages the public library to co-operate with other groups in the community that it serves in the initiation and provision of information services, program events and other activities related to its goals and objectives. As well, it stresses co-operation with organizations in the community to promote cultural development and cultural activities.

2. Library Systems

The Libraries Act makes provision for municipalities, improvement districts, special areas and school authorities to form a larger regional system. Such a system is then responsible to its various member municipalities and governing agencies for provision of specified services.

The Libraries Regulation requires the employment of professionally trained librarians in public library systems. If the library system provides service to school authorities, it must also employ a qualified teacher-librarian.

Co-operation with other community organizations and agencies is also stressed for library systems.

3. **Community Libraries**

The Libraries Act states that community libraries may only be established in hamlets within improvement districts, and then only when no service is provided by a library system. The community library board has full management control of the community library.

4. **School Libraries**

School libraries are administered under the Alberta School Act, R.S.A. chapter S-3,as amended, with the Board of Trustees of the jurisdiction responsible for the operation as part of the total educational system. A board may pass a resolution authorizing the making of an agreement with another board, person or a municipality. Statements on the quality of library service which should be available to students are outlined in "Policy, Guidelines, Procedures and Standards for School Libraries in Alberta" from Alberta Education.

"Focus on Learning: an Integrated Program Model for Alberta School Libraries", 1985, states the need for school libraries to co-operate and share with one another, with other districts and with outside agencies such as public libraries - either in formal or informal agreements. At the same time it emphasizes the role of the library in the instructional program.

5. **Community School**

A community school is consciously oriented to the community it serves. By design, a community school exhibits characteristics such as community-related curriculum, involvement of parents, interagency co-operation, and facility adaptation for community use. Designated community schools set out, in a written renewable program plan, to exhibit these characteristics and others through a participatory process involving all affected publics. The library in such a school should be available for community use. It may or may not be combined with the local public library.

B. Roles

1. Public Libraries

The public library serves the cultural, educational and recreational needs of the entire community from preschoolers to senior citizens. Its staffing, collections and services are designed to meet the needs of a widely diversified clientele whose participation and use are entirely voluntary. School populations are just one part of the total group of public library patrons.

2. School Libraries

The primary responsibility of the school library is to the educational program of the school, the curriculum the teachers, and the students. The principal, teachers and the teacher-librarian share the responsibility for designing and implementing an effective program which integrates the library's resources and services with the curricular needs of the school. In addition to responding to teacher and student demands, it must also be in the forefront of educational change and innovation. Its staffing, collection and program are geared to serving a specific group of patrons engaged in specialized tasks, in a time schedule, and on a compulsory basis.

C. Regulations and Guidelines

The Libraries Regulation, promulgated under the authority of the Libraries Act, states:

"A municipal board shall not operate a library housed in a school unless

(a) the municipal board enters into an agreement with the school authority that sets out the responsibilities of the employees of both,

(b) the municipal board has its own bank account and signing officers, none of whom are employees of the school authority, and

(c) the library is open to the public outside of the hours during which the school is in operation for regular classes, including evening hours, weekend hours, or both."

A draft agreement is included as Appendix 1.

D. Existing Joint Facilities

The existing school-housed/public libraries in Alberta generally fall into one of the following categories:

(a) an integrated collection housed in a school which is administered co-operatively by two authorities (school and public) to serve both the school and the public generally;

(b) a school library which makes materials available to the public;

(c) separate collections, staff and routines administered by two authorities sharing the same school facility;

(d) consolidation of a school library and public library under one authority and operating usually in a school facility to serve all users.

At present the total number of school housed public libraries is 64. When comparing the size of the collection, hours of operation, staffing and the programs of these libraries with libraries not housed in schools, only five of these could be considered to be giving acceptable public library service as compared to non-school housed public libraries in Alberta. Using Alberta Education's "Policy, Guidelines, Procedures and Standards for school libraries in Alberta", only four have acceptable staffing arrangements.

Of the 65 designated community schools, nine have a joint school-public library combination. Of these, six report one full-time library staff member. In only three is the library open ten or more hours outside of regular school hours for exclusive public library services. Thirty-eight of the remaining community schools do allow public access to, and use of, their library collections and equipment with varying degrees of restrictions.

II. OPERATION AND EVALUATION OF COMBINED SERVICES

In spite of the demonstrated ineffectiveness of the school housed public library, such combinations continue to exist. There are many reasons for this situation, particularly in small communities. Chief among these is the problem of space - the school may be the only available public building. The other major factor is the provision of staff to administer the collection. Because of the lack of choices, especially in rural areas, these arrangements for school and public library service have continued. Where these exist the concern must be to provide the best library service possible within the existing limitations.

The following questions are provided as a means of self-examination for the school-housed public libraries already in existence and may assist in evaluating the service provided.

1. Physical Facility

a) Where is the library located in relation to the instructional areas of the school? How convenient is this for public use? (i.e. does it encourage walk-in traffic)

b) How accessible is the library to the outside entrance?

c) What instructional activities, such as reading, research, viewing and instruction, can be carried on the the library? Which activities can be carried out simultaneously and/or when the public is using the library?

d) What space is available for separate public library functions? (e.g. quiet areas,pre-school programs, school projects, public meeting rooms)

e) How can the public have access with the least intrusion on school classes and vice-versa?

f) What provisions exist for access by the elderly and handicapped?

g) Where are public washrooms located?

h) How easily can the facility be opened outside of school hours, especially evenings, weekends and summer vacations?

i) How is the facility identified, both internally and externally, as a public library?

j) What previous experience has there been with use of school facilities by community groups?

2. Staff

a) Is one librarian in charge of both aspects of the operation? If so, what are the qualifications and experience required?

b) Are there two librarians, one for the school and one for the public? If so, who is ultimately responsible, and are the salaries equitable?

c) Does the school library staff meet the standards listed in "Policy, Guidelines, Procedures and Standards for School Libraries in Alberta"?

d) To whom are the librarian(s) responsible: the Public Library Board, the School Board, or a combination of the two?

e) What are the professional requirements and responsibilities when hiring a teacher-librarian and/or graduate librarian?

3. Decision-making Authority

a) Are there two governing boards (school board and public library board)?

If so, which makes decisions in what areas? (e.g. operating policies, staffing)

b) What mechanisms exist to foster co-operation between the two boards ?

c) If there is one board established with representatives from the school and public sectors, how does it relate to the parent boards? Who does it represent, in what proportion and how are decisions made on appointments?

d) What is the status and involvement of the Superintendent of schools and the school administrators?

e) What provision is there for equitable and legal separation of the two libraries should this become necessary?

4. Financing

a) Who pays for which materials and services and is this division of responsibility fair and equitable?

b) Who pays for the maintenance and upkeep of the facility and is this division of responsibility fair and equitable?

c) How are salaries and benefits calculated and who pays for whom?

d) Who pays for the capital improvements to the facility, equipment, supplies, mailing, printing, telephone, insurance and is this division of responsibility fair and equitable?

e) How is the bookkeeping to be handled?

5. Collection Development

a) How is the balance achieved with respect to materials for all user groups?

b) How is the selection policy established? Is there a selection policy for the school library and one for the public library?

c) What is the procedure for handling controversial materials? Is this procedure the same for both school and public library materials?

d) What steps have been taken to ensure that the school library collection reflects the instructional programme in the school?

6. Administration

a) What differences are there in the circulation procedures for students and for public library patrons? What can be done to make procedures more uniform?

b) What materials in the collection, if any, are restricted to certain groups of users?

c) How are other educational jurisdictions served as part of the public service?

d) What is the status of the card catalogues (combined or separate)?

e) How is the collection displayed and shelved - integrated or divided?

7. Program

a) What is the on-going plan for the integration of the library resources and services with the instructional programme?

b) What steps are taken to ensure that the program implementation is in accord with that described in "Focus on Learning: an Integrated Program Model for Alberta Schools".

III. NETWORKING AND CO-OPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

With the tremendous explosion of knowledge, all libraries realize that they cannot possibly store all the information users may require. Where, in the past, there has been limited sharing of resources and services, both public and school libraries are strongly encouraged by their respective government departments to share and co-operate with other institutions and organizations. Not only are school libraries encouraged to do this, but the schools, too, are so directed.

Alberta is developing a framework for co-operative library service, and systems which facilitate sharing are emerging as an alternative to the school-housed public library. All citizens, no matter what the age, are better served when different types of library are well established in a community, with both formal and informal co-operative arrangements between them. The development of library networks, including regional library systems, will best provide the resources required to serve all sectors of the public.

Formal sharing agreements may exist between neighbouring libraries, school or public, with school districts and outside agencies such as colleges, museums and galleries. Informal agreements are easily made through direct personal contact with those individuals holding the needed expertise or materials.

Examples of co-operative agreements, formal or informal are:

(a) participation in regional film libraries to provide access to more audiovisual materials;

(b) membership in co-operative regional library systems which will serve both school and public libraries;

(c) purchasing of library services such as core collections, processing, selection lists and locally produced audiovisual materials from other libraries, school boards and other agencies;

(d) participating in computer-based library networks that provide on-line cataloguing and bibliographic data;

(e) reciprocal interlibrary loan agreements with existing libraries;

(f) placing of public library book or microfiche catalogues in school libraries;

(g) joint evaluation of resources;

(h) class orientation visits to the public library;

(i) regular joint meetings of staffs and boards of various types of libraries within a community to discuss areas of common interest;

(j) discussion of areas of specialization in collection development including reciprocal use agreements;

(k) joint inservice training;

(l) joint planning for special events, holidays and book festivals.

IV. PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICE WITHIN A SCHOOL

Since 1975, there has been an increased emphasis on the relationship of the school to its community. In this milieu, any library operation within a school must consider the quality of service to all user groups and, in particular, the criteria set out in section II of this statement. A new, combined service should not penalize either segment of the public served.

Criteria for including public library service within a school might be as follows:

1. If the school is a designated community school or is applying for such designation the following must apply:

   (a) the appointment by the various jurisdictions involved of a community-school advisory committee which would advise on the operation of the community school;

(b) the governing principle that no one agency has jurisdiction over another to ensure equality in any partnerships that are established;

(c) the presence of a community-school co-ordinator with adequate operating budget responsible for the operation of integrated community-school programs;

(d) the process of community identification of needs and resources and the participation in decision making;

(e) a close alliance between volunteerism and the community school coupled with the need for professional support in the development of citizen skills related to the successful performance in voluntary participatory endeavors.

2. In other, exisiting, cases a committee representing all bodies concerned with school and public library service should be struck to formulate answers to the questions posed in Section II. Only when these questions have been answered to the satisfaction of all should planning proceed.

3. The key people involved in the joint operation must have a mutual commitment to shared services for the operation to be a success. These people should be the chairman of the public library board, the Superintendent of Schools, the school principal and the librarian(s).

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With the emphasis on co-operation with all community agencies by public and school libraries, and a contracted commitment by community schools, more shared projects such as those suggested on page 10, as opposed to shared facilities, should be explored and undertaken for the mutual benefit of all.

This statement recommends:

1) The development of co-operative arrangements between school libraries and public libraries be strongly encouraged at local, regional and provincial levels.

2) No further development of combined school/public libraries except in designated community schools.

3) That where municipal libraries are housed in schools, the municipal board should comply with the Libraries Regulation, and both parties should evaluate the operation and its success against recommended guidelines.

4) Criteria for future consolidated operations in a community school setting should be those set out in this document.

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APPENDIX I

D R A F T

Agreement for the Operation of a Joint Public and School Library

Memorandum of Agreement made this day of

between

THE LIBRARY BOARD, a coporation established pursuant to Part 2 of the Libraries Act, being Chapter L-12.1 of the Revised Statutes of Alberta, 1983 (hereinafter referred to as "the Board").

PARTY OF THE FIRST PART;

- and -

THE SCHOOL AUTHORITY OF

PARTY OF THE SECOND PART;

WHEREAS the Board and the school authority each has a collection of library materials which it desires to consolidate with the collection of the other in order that better library service may be made available to all residents of the of and environs; in the school(s), and;

WHEREAS each party has resolved to enter into an agreement providing for the terms and conditions under which the libraries of the parties may be consolidated and established, maintained and operated as a joint library; and

WHEREAS a copy of the resolution of the Board and the School Authority is attached hereto and forms part of this agreement;

NOW THEREFORE the parties agree as follows:

1. The book collections of the parties shall be consolidated into one book stock in the library and shall be made available for circulation to all residents of and environs;

2. The library shall be established in the school at the expense of _____ in a room or rooms, adequate for the purpose, that shall be:

   a) open to the public outside of the hours during which the school is in operation for regular classes, including evening hours, weekend hours or both as indicated in the Libraries Regulation and the bylaws of the Board,

   b) readily accessible to the proper offices and facilities, including washrooms,

   c) maintained, heated and cleaned by the _____

   d) properly designated by exterior and interior signage,

   e) accessible to members of the Board or staff for governing and administrative purposes.

3(1) The School Authority shall provide such staff as may be required to administer to the needs of those using the library during school hours. The responsibilities of this person are listed in Appendix A.

(2) The Board shall provide such staff as may be required to administer to the needs of those using the library during public library hours. The responsibilities of this person are listed in Appendix B.

(3) An agreement shall be reached by the school authority and the Board regarding the resonsibilities of the staff person(s) provided to operate the library during school library and public library hours.

4(1) Any book or other library item placed in the library by a party on the coming into force of this agreement or purchased at any time from funds provided by either party shall remain the property of the party that provided it or whose funds were used to purchase it, as this may be.

(2) The librarian(s) shall designate each book or library item as the property of one or other of the parties by

a) placing an imprint of the ownership stamp of the appropriate party in the book or library item, and

b) making a notation as to ownership in the shelf list.

5. Each party shall

a) develop policies to decide what books or other library materials shall be purchased from the funds provided by that party, and

b) may delegate the authority to the librarian(s).

6. The Municipal Council shall appoint one member to the Board, representing the school authority while this agreement remains in force.

7. This agreement shall come into force on _____ and will remain in force for no less than three years thereafter.

8. After the expiration of three years from the coming into force of this agreement, the agreement shall continue in force from year to year unless and until either party gives to the other party three months notice in writing of the attention to terminate this agreement.

9. Where the agreement is terminated pursuant to Section 8, the librarian(s) shall

a) recall all the books and library materials that are on loan to students at the school or members of the public at the time.

b) return all books and library materials being the property of the Board and all shelf list cards and other records relating thereto, to the Board.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties hereto have executed this Agreement on the day and year hereunder written

Signed, Sealed and Delivered
on behalf of the _____
Library Board, this _____ day
of _____, A.D. 19___

_____ Library Board

_____
Chairperson

_____
Secretary

Signed, Sealed and Delivered
on behalf of the School Authority
of the _____
this _____ day of
_____A.D. 19___

School Authority
Of _____

_____
Chairperson

_____
Secretary Treasurer

APPENDIX II

Extract from
"Policy, Guidelines, Procedures and Standards for School Libraries in Alberta"

B. Library Staff

1. Professional direction is critical to the development and implementation of an effective library program. Professional direction may be provided through a variety of alternatives:

   (a) By a full-time teacher-librarian on the school staff.

   (b) By a teacher-librarian with a part-time library and part-time teaching assignment.

   (c) By a teacher-librarian serving more than one school in the district.

   (d) By supervision by a school district (central office) teacer-librarian.

   (e) By co-operative agreement with a Regional Library System.

   (f) Where no teacher-librarian is available, by the principal and teaching staff of the school.

   Note: (i) The minimum qualifications of a teacher-librarian should include teacher certification and successful teaching experience along with university credits in a least eight half courses in librarianship and instructional technology.

   (ii) Active participation on the part of the principal and teachers in the implementation of the library program must increase as teacher-librarian time is decreased.

2. Qualified technical/clerical support should also be provided.

3. Professional and technical/clerical support should meet or exceed the following standards:

School Size	Teacher Librarian	Technical/Clerical Support
150 Students	-	1/2 - 1
300 Students	1/2	1/2 - 1
500 Students	1	1
750 Students	1	1 1/2 - 2
1000 Students	1	2
Over 1000 Students	1 1/2 - 2	2 1/2 - 3